

An expanded NATO provides the stable environment needed by its new member nations and aspirant countries in Central and Eastern Europe to successfully complete the political and economic transformation for integration into Europe and the community of Western democracies. Already, NATO membership requirements have been absolutely crucial in moving aspirant nations to civilian control of their militaries, transparency in military budgeting, interoperability of their military forces with NATO, resolution of internal ethnic conflicts and territorial disputes, greater respect for human rights, reduced governmental and business corruption, judicial reform, market-oriented economies, and functioning parliamentary democracies.

The Alliance's military force structure, with its enhanced levels of interoperability, joint defense planning, command/control/communication/intelligence systems, and common force goals and doctrine, provides the crucial basis for forming ad hoc coalitions of willing NATO countries to take on combat, peacekeeping, or humanitarian relief missions—supplemented by PIP participants, as in Bosnia and in Kosovo.

NATO membership motivates member states generally to sustain their commitment to collective defense and, in particular, to meet the goals of NATO's Defense Capabilities Initiative (DCI). Thus, our allies improve their militarily capabilities and are less dependent on American forces.

The Alliance has accepted a new role in the war against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems among rogue states and non-state actors. Success will require more than the capability for a rapid and effective military response. It also will require: an enhanced level of intelligence-sharing; coordination among NATO members' law enforcement agencies; improved police, judicial and financial agency cooperation; and information exchanges.

Russian civilian leadership is gradually recognizing that NATO is not a threat but rather a forum where Russia can most effectively communicate with her western neighbors. Additionally, Russian civilian leadership in the NATO-Russia Council and the confidence-building and cooperative steps that follow from the new council can lead to the economic prosperity and security of the community of Euro-Atlantic democracies.

At a time when overt threats from Russia to its neighbors immediately to the west have declined or disappeared, and when intense opposition to NATO expansion by the civilian Russian leadership has noticeably declined, there should be less reticence among NATO members to accept Baltic nation members and to willingly bear the mutual defense costs and concerns related to these prospective NATO members.

With the careful redirection of some of NATO's focus away from meeting a massive Soviet/Russia strike against NATO Europe, and toward new tasks of peacekeeping, responding rapidly to out-of-area military or terrorist actions, and fighting the war on terrorism in NATO countries, the aspirant countries, with fewer resources and generally, smaller populations than most NATO members, can bring specialized military capabilities to the table for use in these new NATO missions.

Mr. Speaker, Congress must recognize that NATO is adapting to meet the threats to its

member nations and to its collective interest. With the implementation of the Combined Joint Task Force (CJTF) concept for the assemblage of effective coalitions of the willing, NATO now has far more flexibility to address a range of new and very different threats. When the United States must defend its interests out of area, it is more likely to have some friends from NATO at its side who can effectively operate with it, despite a very troubling U.S.-Europe military capabilities gap.

Finally, and in conclusion, bringing in new qualified nations to NATO is not, on balance, a burden. Aspirant countries' vigorous interest in membership and their commitments to democracy, peace and stability will make NATO a more vital organization in an eastern European neighborhood. These countries have been striving to meet NATO membership qualifications and to finally join the ranks of the prosperous, peaceful, democratic nations of the Euro-Atlantic region. How, morally, can we deny them this tremendous step toward these worthy goals—some 57 years after the end of World War II?

Mr. Speaker, this Member urges his colleagues to vote "aye" on this resolution.

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I have no other speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 468, as amended.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds of those present have voted in the affirmative.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

RECOMMENDING INTEGRATION OF LITHUANIA, LATVIA, AND ESTONIA INTO NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution (H. Con. Res. 116) recommending the integration of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

The Clerk read as follows:

H. CON. RES. 116

Whereas the Baltic countries of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are undergoing a historic process of democratic and free market transformation after emerging from decades of brutal Soviet occupation;

Whereas each of these Baltic countries has conducted peaceful transfers of political power—in Lithuania since 1990 and in Latvia and Estonia since 1991;

Whereas each of these Baltic countries has been exemplary and consistent in its respect for human rights and civil liberties;

Whereas the governments of these Baltic countries have made consistent progress toward establishing civilian control of their militaries through active participation in the Partnership for Peace program and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) peace support operations;

Whereas Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are participating in the NATO-led multinational military force in the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo;

Whereas Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia are consistently increasing their defense budget allocations and have adopted laws providing that such allocations for defense will be at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP) by 2002 for Lithuania and Estonia and by 2003 for Latvia;

Whereas each of these Baltic countries has clearly demonstrated its ability to operate with the military forces of NATO nations and under NATO standards;

Whereas former Secretary of Defense Perry stipulated five generalized standards for entrance into NATO: support for democracy, including toleration of ethnic diversity and respect for human rights; building a free market economy; civilian control of the military; promotion of good neighborly relations; and development of military interoperability with NATO;

Whereas each of these Baltic countries has satisfied these standards for entrance into NATO; and

Whereas NATO will consider at its 2002 summit meeting in Prague the further enlargement of its alliance: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate concurring), That it is the sense of Congress that—

(1) Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are to be commended for their progress toward political and economic liberty and meeting the guidelines for prospective members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) set out in chapter 5 of the September 1995 Study on NATO Enlargement;

(2) Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia would make an outstanding contribution toward furthering the goals of NATO should they become members;

(3) extension of full NATO membership to these Baltic countries would contribute to stability, freedom, and peace in the Baltic region and Europe as a whole; and

(4) with complete satisfaction of NATO guidelines and criteria for membership, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia should be invited in 2002 to become full members of NATO.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) and the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WATSON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY).

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days within which to revise and extend their remarks and to include extraneous material on the concurrent resolution under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield 4 minutes to the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. SMITH).

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey. Mr. Speaker, I thank the distinguished chairman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to vote in support of H. Con. Res. 116, recommending the integration of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. I believe that these three nations have demonstrated the commitment necessary to become full-fledged members of that organization and will prove to be valuable allies in the war against international terrorism and the effort to promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law around the world. These are the foundations, of course, for peace and prosperity; and they will be and are even now major players.

Mr. Speaker, 11 years ago with the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania threw off the yoke of Soviet domination and regained their independence. Between World War I and World War II, they had been sovereign nations and respected members of the international community. In 1939, however, they were illegally partitioned between Hitler and Stalin as part of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop agreement. Based on this agreement, Hitler gave Stalin the green light to seize the Baltic states.

I am proud to state and to note that the illegal incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the Soviet Union was never recognized by the United States Government. Now Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are again sovereign nations, respected members of the international community, desirous of joining and contributing to the most successful defensive alliance Europe has ever known. They are working individually and among themselves to improve their defense posture and coordination. All three Baltic states are major contributing forces to the stabilization force in Bosnia. In Afghanistan, an Estonia mine-detecting team is working with our forces near the Bagram air base. They are working assiduously towards membership in the European Union and play a significant role in the deliberations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which I chair.

In the early 1990s, there were OSCE missions to Estonia and Latvia to assist in the resolution of the problem of integrating the non-native populations. These missions, I am very happy to say, have now been withdrawn as the challenges of integration recede further and further into history.

I would be remiss, however, if I did not mention a rule of law concern that is relevant to this discussion. During and after World War II, millions of people fled Eastern and central Europe to escape Nazi and Communist persecution. Most of them lost everything they and their families had earned and built up over generations including homes, businesses, and artwork. Since the early 1990's these people or their descendants have tried to regain through legal means the properties that were confiscated. The Helsinki Commission, again a commission that

seeks to implement the Helsinki Final Act, has monitored the property restitution and compensation efforts being made by post-Communist governments, and this past July we held our third hearing on that subject. Among the NATO candidate countries where the issue of property restitution has been particularly problematic are Lithuania, Croatia, and Romania.

Central and East European governments have done much regarding property restitution; and indeed they have done some very good things, many of these countries. However, there needs to be done more in this area, and we would call upon them again as we encourage them to join NATO and are looking forward to this partnership which strengthens and deters against aggression that this issue needs to be resolved, and it needs to be resolved as quickly as humanly possible.

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I rise in strong support of this resolution, and I commend the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS) for introducing this important resolution. Mr. Speaker, throughout the grim decades of the Cold War, the U.S. Congress consistently fought to ensure that the international community never acknowledged the incorporation of the Baltic states, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, into the Soviet Union. Since these countries earned their independence in 1991, Congress has consistently supported their historic transformation into democratic and free market societies. From the first day of independence, all three Baltic countries made NATO membership a cornerstone of their foreign policy regardless of which political party controlled the government.

Mr. Speaker, Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have made Herculean efforts to prepare themselves for NATO membership. They have built armed forces modeled on Western armies. They have consistently maintained their defense budget at or around 2 percent of their GDP during these difficult economic times. Their people have consistently supported NATO membership with all its opportunities and commitments.

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have all sent troops to assist the European peace-making efforts under NATO. The Baltic states have also joined the United States in the war on terrorism by offering to deploy forces to Afghanistan as part of the Danish contingent. These countries had some difficult legacies to overcome including Holocaust-era issues and dealing with Russian ethnic minorities. Latvia and Estonia have made considerable progress on minority rights issues and Lithuania has worked with the Jewish community to address property restitution and other Holocaust issues. These countries are now on the right track. Mr. Speaker, I strongly urge my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. Speaker, I yield 5 minutes to the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. KUCINICH).

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentlewoman for yielding me this time.

Mr. Speaker, the nations of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania have long awaited accession to NATO; and throughout this country, people representing various communities supporting Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania have been seeking for recognition not only for NATO but also recognition so that there can be a full involvement with the European community. It is so important that this Congress recognizes the importance of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania to the world community and encourage not only excision but also encourage the full integration into the European community and the world community of these nations.

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These nations have much to offer in terms of their commitment to democratic values, in terms of their commitment to development of their economies, in terms their commitment to technological development and in terms of their friendship with the United States.

I think that this resolution, which seeks to support Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, is a step along the way towards rewarding those nations that not only have pursued democratic traditions but also are attempting to be integrated with the economies of Europe and of the United States.

NATO accession is seen as not simply being participation in the defense of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization member states, but also it is seen as an opportunity towards a more full participation in the world community on all the economic issues.

So I am pleased to work with my good friend, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), and others who are concerned that this resolution receive this attention and support, and to stand here on behalf of those citizens in the Baltics, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, who have long awaited this moment when their nations would be recognized, and all of their friends in this country who have long awaited the moment for the United States to show support for the integration of these nations and for accession of these nations.

This is an important moment, and I am proud to be here on the floor to join with my colleague from California and to state to the world community that Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are ready, they have been willing, they are able, and they deserve the support of the Congress of the United States.

Ms. WATSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H. Con. Res. 116, which was introduced by our colleague, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS).

In light of the action taken by the Subcommittee on Europe and just now by the House, which endorsed the Baltic States for membership in NATO, I believe this resolution is complimentary to H. Res. 468 and should be adopted.

The resolution endorses the candidacies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania for NATO membership and discusses in detail why the three Baltic nations deserve to be invited into the alliance.

Mr. Speaker, last year, the Baltic nations celebrated the 10th anniversary of the resumption of their independence after a long period of Soviet dominance. The changes which have taken place in those countries has been amazing in every aspect. The total political, economic and social transformation they have gone through in preparation for NATO and EU membership has been impressive, and they deserve to be recognized or their accomplishments by being invited to join the alliance.

The author of this legislation, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. SHIMKUS), has long been a supporter and spokesman for the Baltics, serving as the chairman of the Baltic Caucus in the House. He has given tireless devotion to promoting these countries and their accomplishments. Passage of this resolution is as much about his dedication as it is about theirs.

Mr. Speaker, I do not believe there could be any better additions to the NATO alliance than these three nations, and I urge the adoption of the resolution.

Mr. TERRY. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 116 to recommend the integration of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Since its inception in 1949, NATO has served as a vehicle for peace and stability throughout Europe. While the imminent threat of the Warsaw Pact has passed, one need not look far to see the continued utility of NATO. Far from becoming a defunct organization when the Berlin wall fell 13 years ago, NATO has adapted to the changing security dynamics of the post-cold war era and has continued to be a means through which we can achieve peace in Europe.

One of the most measurable successes of NATO is the eagerness of former Warsaw Pact countries and former Republics of the Soviet Union to join the western alliance. Three years ago, we officially welcomed Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. At the Prague Summit in November the alliance will once again consider expanding its membership. We should recognize the tremendous gains the states of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have made by accepting them into the NATO fold.

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have all individually made extraordinary advances toward democracy and free market principles. Each has successfully thrown off the yoke of Soviet oppression and has instituted government structures that assure freedom and rule of law for their citizens. Each has demonstrated a respect for human rights and a desire to be oriented toward the freedom-loving states of the

West. Each has actively worked to achieve the standards necessary for accession into NATO, and each has succeeded in this endeavor.

Membership in NATO will help cement the progress the Baltic states have made since achieving independence in 1991. More importantly, NATO expansion to incorporate the Baltic states, as former republics of the Soviet Union, will serve to strengthen the alliance in its mission to secure peace and security in the Euro-Atlantic region.

As a member of the House Baltic Caucus, I applaud the strides that Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have made and urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this resolution.

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, as an American of Lithuanian decent, and cochairman of the House Baltic Caucus, it is with great pride that I rise today in support of H. Con. Res. 116. This resolution supports the integration of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia into NATO.

In the aftermath of September 11, 2001, I believe it is even more important than ever to secure Europe through NATO enlargement. This past year there has been a fundamental shift in the argument over NATO membership. We are no longer questioning "if" NATO will expand, we are asking "who" will be invited to join in 2002. In a major foreign policy address at Warsaw University on June 15, 2001, President George W. Bush spoke decisively for enlarging NATO to include the Baltic nations when he said, "All the new democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea, should have the same chance for security and freedom to join the institutions of Europe." Now, even the NATO defense ministers are telling the press that the decision has already been made to invite the Baltic countries to join at the Prague Summit next month.

When considering H. Con. Res. 116, it is important to remember the Baltic's history. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia lost their independence in 1940 after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that placed the Baltic States in the Soviet sphere of influence. The United States never recognized the legitimacy of the Soviet occupation. For over 50 years, the Baltic people endured unspeakable horrors under Stalin's totalitarian regime. With incredible tenacity and bravery, they resisted occupation. In 1991 they reasserted their independence, causing the domino effect that led the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia are among the greatest success stories of post-communist Europe. Against all odds, in the decade since they regained independence, the Baltic countries have established stable democratic governments, free market economic systems, and exemplary respect for human rights and civil liberties. With reoccupation a possible long-term threat, they have turned their efforts toward security which can only be achieved by joining NATO.

Submitting their applications for NATO membership in 1994, the Baltics have already been contributing as if they were members of the alliance. Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have all sent troops to assist the European peacekeeping efforts under NATO, the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, as well as essential linguistic support for the current campaign against terrorism. Despite their modest budgets and tremendous social needs, each country has committed itself to spending 2 percent

of its GDP on military preparations in compliance with the membership action plan (MAP). This is remarkable because in comparison, many NATO members, including Germany, do not currently spend 2 percent of their GDP on defense. H. Con. Res. 116 backs Baltic membership contingent on the completion of the membership action plan (MAP) requirements, which they have been vigorously pursuing.

There are some who argue that Baltic membership in NATO will cause a dangerous tension with Russia. I respectfully disagree. Expanding the umbrella of protection to the Baltics will never pose a threat to Russia. Instead it will enhance stability to Moscow's west, which is to Russia's advantage. In the recent past, Russia raised the same complaints about Poland's candidacy, and now that Poland has joined the alliance, the two countries have a better relationship than ever before. Baltic inclusion into NATO will have the same effect. Baltic membership might temporarily wound Russian pride, but it will be beneficial in the long term, forcing Russia to focus on its ailing economy, not its geopolitical situation.

Moreover, in light of the terrorist attacks, Russia seems to be accepting Baltic membership. On October 3, 2001 Russian President Vladimir Putin stated in Brussels that he is prepared to reconsider Russia's opposition to NATO enlargement. Putin stated that September 11th has brought relations between Russian and the West to a "new level."

While relations between the United States and the Baltic countries are very strong, the Baltics feel like the west abandoned them in exchange for peace with Moscow after World War II. If we fail to extend NATO membership to the Baltics in this round of enlargement, they will believe that we have scarified them once again. It would stall the reform movements underway which are fueled by hope for NATO membership and could cause instability in the region.

I introduced H. Con. Res. 116 because it is very important for the House of Representatives to send a message to NATO leaders before the 2002 summit that the United States stands firmly behind the Baltics' candidacy. Only NATO membership will enhance security in Europe. Until they are invited to join, the Baltic region will remain ripe for crises that could contaminate the United States-Russian relationship and threaten European security. For these reasons, I ask you to vote for H. Con. Res. 116.

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PETRI). The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GALLEGLY) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the concurrent resolution, H. Con. Res. 116.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds having voted in favor thereof) the rules were suspended and the concurrent resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

RECOMMENDING THE INTEGRATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVAKIA INTO THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION (NATO)

Mr. GALLEGLY. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to